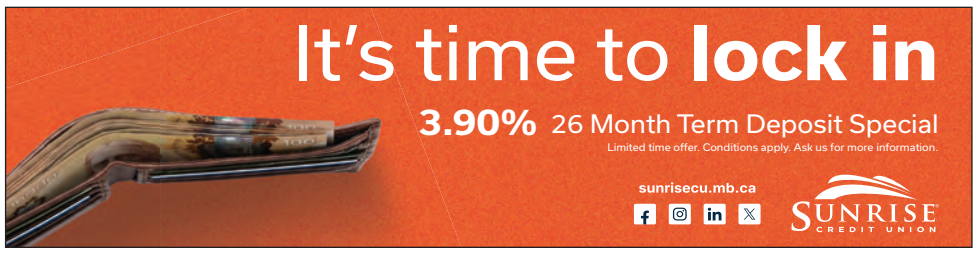
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NOVEMBER 13, 2026 | EMPIRE: VOL 122 NO 13 / ADVANCE: VOL 142 NO 15 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS





An interview with Mayor Bruce Dunning

By Lauren Halowaty
Empire Advance

As a follow-up to the election of Bruce Dunning as Mayor of Virden, The Virden-Empire-Advance posed the following questions. We are pleased to report Mayor Dunning's answers below.

What inspired you to run for Mayor this time around?

I felt strongly that Virden has the ability to become more than it is, and that with the support of our residents and volunteer groups I can assist in making this happen.

What are your primary goals and top priorities for serving the community during your first year in office for this term?

I want to see the water issue resolved; a standardized means of communication between residents and the town implemented; council meetings and hearings available online in real time; and a land development plan initiated.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Front row: Town of Virden CAO Neil Smith, Councillor Marc Savy, Councillor Travis Penner, Councillor Gord Halowaty, and ACAO Jared Jaffrey. On the stairs front: Councillor Lynette Grumpelt, and Councillor Tom Makarchuk, On the stairs back: Councillor Tara Maxwell and Mayor Bruce Dunning.

Could you outline your strategy for engaging with local residents and ensuring their concerns are effectively heard and addressed? When community members feel overlooked, public frustration can grow. How do you intend to demonstrate to residents that their input is being actively listened to and considered?

Council meetings and hearings are always open to residents wishing to attend. I will also be recommending to council that these be made available online. I will be suggesting to council that a standardized communication system be implemented that will allow all citizens to communicate effectively with the town via online or hard copy.

Many Virden residents have expressed growing concern regarding local water quality, with many resorting to purchasing bottled water and ice from outside the community. What specific steps will your administration take to resolve these water concerns and restore public confidence in Virden's water supply, and will there be water bill reductions for residents when usage advisories are in place?

The water source/quality is the main priority for council. The town has been, and will continue, working with professional engineers, geohydrologists, the water services board and the province to resolve this issue. The water quality is the same as it was 20 years ago but the federal standards have been adjusted, resulting in our water not currently meeting them. The town has an engineering firm working on treatment solutions for the current source water and a geohydrologist investigating alternate sources. There will ultimately be a resolution, but current estimates are approximately 15 million dollars, which is why we are in communication with the province and the federal government regarding project funding. Water utilities in Manitoba are strictly regulated by the Public Utilities Board and are required to recover operating and capital expenses via utility charges. Rate changes must be submitted to, and formally approved by, the PUB.

Looking ahead, what key goals and priorities do you hope to accomplish by the end of your term as Mayor?

I want to finalize the airport upgrades and subdivision, see both stages of the firehall construction completed and initiate a proactive and ongoing development attraction plan.

Outside of your official duties as mayor, how do you enjoy spending your personal time?

My wife, Suzanne, and I have 16 grandchildren, and they are all actively involved in music, arts or sports so most of our free time is consumed by attending their functions.



Inside...



LEGION MEMBER 60 YEAR PIN P2



FLOWER ATTIC OPEN HOUSE P7

Virden Legion honours 60-Year member and reflects on sacrifice at early Remembrance Service

By Lauren Halowaty
Empire-Advance



SUBMITTED PHOTO

From L-R. Comrades Marc Savy, John Davidson, Curtis Smith, Linda Smith, pin recipient Leo Gabrielle, and Rev'd Marcel Archambault stand together post Remembrance Day service at The Sherwood Nursing Home.

On November 9, 2026, a solemn and beautiful Remembrance Day service, titled "The Act of Remembrance for Residents of the Sherwood and Westman Nursing Homes", was held at the Sherwood Care Home, organized by The Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 8 in Virden, Manitoba.

Officiated by The Rev'd Marcel Archambault alongside Comrade in Charge Marc Savy, the service was also attended by Comrades Curtis Smith and his wife Comrade Linda Smith, as well as Comrade John Davidson. Together, they gathered to honour and remember those who served.

The order of service opened with "O Canada," followed by greeting and opening prayers ending in the Lord's Prayer, and the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy". A scripture reading from John 15:12–13 led into the traditional observance featuring The Last Post played on trumpet by Michelle Gervin, followed by Silence, Reveille, and The Act of Remembrance.

The service recognized and honoured Leo Gabrielle, who was presented with a pin in recognition of his 60 years as an Ordinary Legion Member. Following the service, Leo stood up to share a poignant personal memory: he spoke of a friend he lost in the war, someone he thinks about often, especially at this time of year, mentioning that no one ever found out what happened to him, only that he never came home.

Rev'd Marcel Archambault offered a deeply moving reflection during his address. He noted that while we often speak broadly of remembering "them," true remembrance happens when we attach a specific name and face. Personalizing "them" makes the hardship, loss, and pain so raw and real that, even though decades have passed, it can still feel like yesterday.

In addition to remembering all who fought and served, Rev'd Archambault paused to pay tribute to Comrade Andy Nash, President of Legion Branch No. 8, who had passed away just a few days prior to the service.

The program concluded with the singing of the hymn "Abide with Me," a standing of "God Save the King," and the final Blessing and Dismissal by Rev'd Archambault.

The cat came back, VPN reunites Stripes with his family

By Beth McConnell
Empire-Advance



When a frail orange cat appeared at a Virden-area property, nobody could have imagined the story that would follow.

The journey home began when Virden resident Cory Hemrica contacted Virden Pet Network volunteer Heather Reimer about a stray cat that had shown up at his house. Hemrica, known for helping local stray cats, was concerned about the animal's condition and hoped someone might recognize him. When Reimer went to see the cat, she found him in terrible shape. "He was nothing but skin and bones," she said.

The cat had a tattoo, but it was badly faded and difficult to read. Concerned for his wellbeing, Reimer brought him home, set up a private kennel in her mudroom, turned up the heat and began feeding him. His hunger was immediate. "He slammed his face into the food dish and didn't come up for air until it was empty," she recalled.

Throughout the weekend, Virden Pet Network shared photos and information about the cat on social media in hopes of identifying him. While a few people wondered whether the cat could be theirs, no one could be certain.

Then Denise Chadney saw the Facebook post.

Chadney was in Niverville for a volleyball tournament when the photo appeared in her feed. She immediately thought the cat resembled Stripes, her family's beloved orange cat who had been missing since the last week of May. "I right away thought, could it be Stripes? It looks so much like him," she said.

When she showed the post to her daughter, Scotlyn, there was no hesitation. "She right away said, 'Oh Mom, that's Stripes. I know it is.'"

The possibility seemed unlikely. Stripes, now 11 years old, had spent his life as an outdoor cat with access to a heated garage, food and water. Chadney said he had never been one to wander.

"When he went missing, we assumed he had gone off somewhere to pass away, as cats do," she said. "We shared with our neighbours to check buildings and keep their eyes peeled for him." The family searched but eventually ran out of leads. Finding him months later in Virden was the last thing they expected.

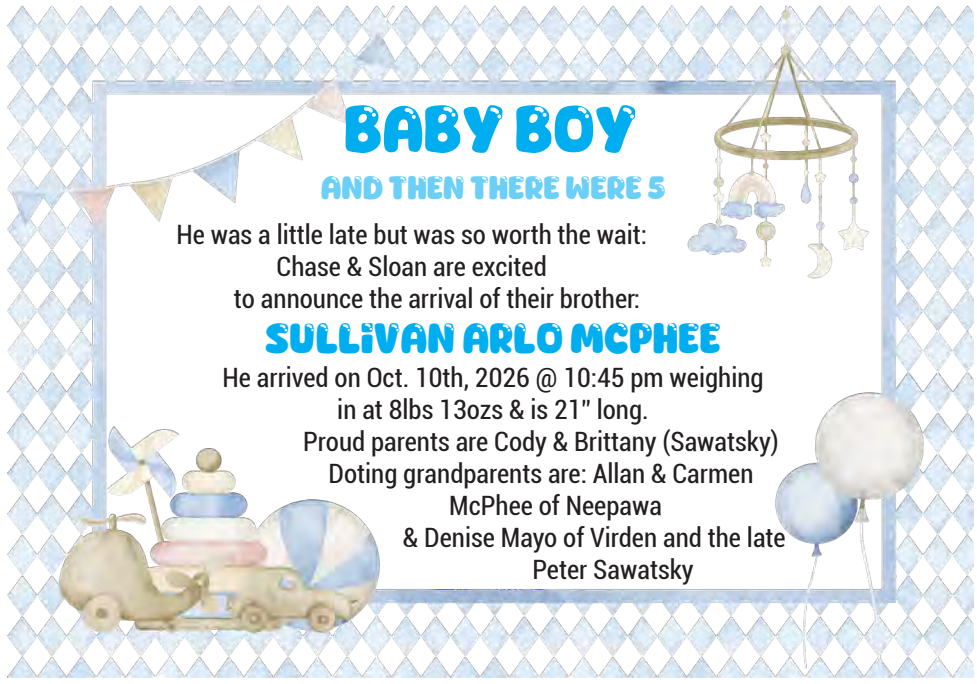
The breakthrough came from the cat's tattoo. Although only part of the marking remained legible, Reimer recognized that it indicated the cat had been neutered and tattooed at Virden Animal Hospital in 2015. Chadney still had records showing Stripes had undergone the procedure there. On Monday morning, veterinary staff confirmed what everyone had begun to suspect, the cat was indeed Stripes.

"Heather messaged me Monday asking, 'When would you like to be reunited with your cat Stripes?'" said Chadney. "It's truly unbelievable."

How Stripes ended up in town remains a mystery, but the family has a theory. The area where he was found is near a location where Chadney's husband regularly parks his truck while carpooling. They believe Stripes may have climbed into the truck box and unknowingly been transported into town.

While he is still recovering from his ordeal, Stripes is now safe at home where he belongs. Chadney said he spends much of his time curled up in a pet bed, catching up on rest and enjoying regular meals. "Poor guy probably hadn't had much sleep living on the streets," she said.

With his strength returning a little more each day, the family is looking forward to reintroducing him to his feline brother, Binx and his new brother Vinny. Thanks to the persistence of community members, Virden Pet Network and local veterinary staff, a cat who seemed lost forever has finally found his way home.



Kenton Curling Club celebrating 125 years



Kenton curling bonspiel from January 2025.

FILE PHOTO

By Gerry Nolan
Rivers Banner

The Kenton Curling Club will be celebrating 125 years of curling in January of 2027. President Don Carter will be organizing the celebration. I am sure he would like some help so give Don a call or there is a curling meeting on November 17 at the RM office.

Kenton held the first bonspiel in 1902. The rink moved around somewhat as the first rink was where the hall now stands.

In 1956 the current rink was built and still serves the community today.

In 2002 the Kenton Curling Club celebrated 100 years of curling. There were 69 rinks that participated in that bonspiel 25 years ago. Here are the winners of various categories that may bring a memory or too.

In the Masters division, the winner was Roy McKenzie from Brandon, followed by Allen Smalley of Brandon, Gordie Lyall from Hamiota followed by Gerry McKay from Brandon. All of these skips called Kenton home at one time or another.

In the ladies division the winners were Megan Bond (Johns), Kenton, Mavis Smith, Hamiota, Sherrilyn Stewart, Kenton and Merrilee Bond, Kenton.

In the men's division the winner was Alex Gerrard from Rivers. He was followed by Lyle Adair from Maryfield, Saskatchewan. Don Grey of Virden was third, and John Finnie of Kenton rounded out the top four teams. Ken Bond of Kenton was the President of the curling club at that time.

Mark it on your calendar and get your team together and come on out to the best town by a dam site and take part in this once in a lifetime bonspiel in Kenton. I will have an update in the future after the curling club has their meeting.

Don Carter is President, so give him a shout for all the information you will need for that weekend.

Virden Adult Literacy Centre (VALC) open house



SUBMITTED PHOTO

L-R, Learner Yan Zokhorov, Instructor Sherron Rhodes, Board Chair Will Noseworthy, Accounts June Fefchak, Program Manager Emily Byers, Learner Yu-Kai Chen and Board member Kathy Welsh.

By Lauren Halowaty
Empire-Advance

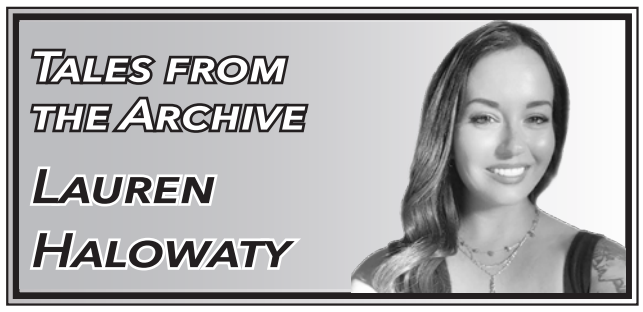
The Virden Adult Literacy Centre (VALC), formerly known as A.P.P.L.E., hosted a successful open house on Tuesday, November 3. The non-profit organization welcomed community members, local business owners, and existing learners for an afternoon of coffee, snacks, and conversation.

The event offered attendees the opportunity to share their learning journeys, discuss future educational goals, and meet the VALC staff, board members, instructors, and new Program Manager Emily Byers. Beyond celebrating current students, the open house aimed to introduce local businesses to educational services that could benefit their workforce.

VALC offers dedicated support for adult learners, including English as a second language (ESL) training, the Canadian Adult Education Credential, mature student diplomas, computer classes, and individual tutoring. Regular program hours run Mondays from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm, Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm and 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm, and Thursdays from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Those who were unable to attend the open house are encouraged to reach out to discuss their adult learning needs. For more information or to coordinate services, call 204-748-2384 or email valc@wcgwave.ca.

Happy Friday the 13th, we won't see another one for 273 days



When you actually stop to think about superstitions, they are quite silly. My colleague, Gerry, recently spent a few weeks exploring the historical meanings behind them, using a book I lent him to dig into their roots. But looking at where these myths come from only confirms what I have felt since childhood: carrying these ancient anxieties into the modern world simply does not add up.

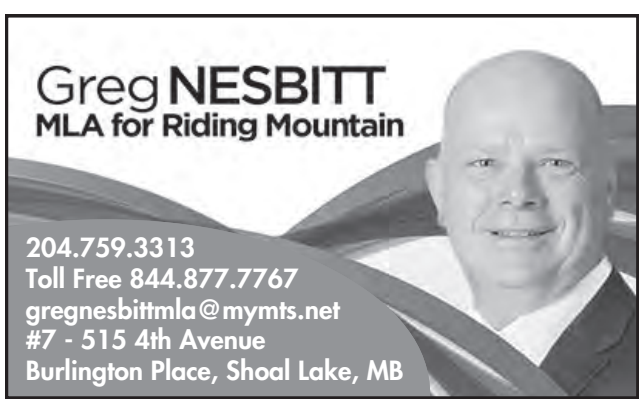
My skepticism started early, thanks to the constants in my life. I have always lived with a black cat; from the time I was a toddler to right now. My current companion is Emily, a sweet, calm, senior girl who literally hugs me whenever she can. Growing up, the idea of fearing Friday the 13th or avoiding black cats never made sense to me. The very animal that folklore labeled an omen was the one constant always there for me, loving, caring, and entirely without judgment. I could never understand why people said such awful things about black cats, or how grown adults would turn the other way from them. Emily taught me at a very young age not to judge based on looks, theories, or outdated ideas.

Nowhere is this cultural quirk more obvious than Friday the 13th. For generations, people have treated this specific date like a recurring cloud, choosing to stay close to home, or blaming any minor inconvenience on the date. But if you look at the calendar math, we have it completely backward.

As you read this paper, we are experiencing a rare calendar alignment. Friday the 13th is actually quite uncommon, popping up at most three times a year. In fact, after today, the phenomenon disappears from our calendars for quite a while. We won't see another one until August 13, 2027, followed by October 13, 2028.

Because of its sheer rarity, it shouldn't be met with dread; it should be celebrated. It is a minor calendar anomaly, a unique occurrence that breaks up the monotony of the standard workweek. Instead of treating it like a bad omen, we can choose to view it as a lucky day where something wonderfully unexpected could happen.

While the traditionalists stay inside, the rest of us, perhaps with a sweet black cat purring in our laps, might just want to go out and buy a lottery ticket.



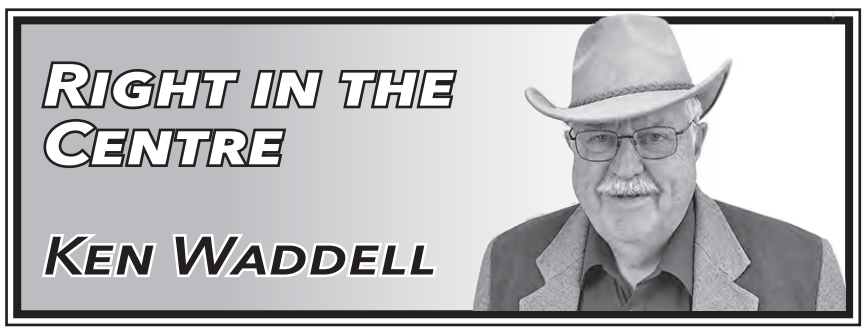
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Hall capacity is limited based on current Manitoba Public Health restrictions/guidelines; renters and attendees must comply with up-to-date Manitoba Public Health Orders.

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Trump self-destructive



Last week's election loss by Donald Trump and the Republicans should've come as no surprise to anyone. Ironically Trump didn't need to lose that election– he brought it on almost entirely by himself.

When Trump won the election in 2024, it also shouldn't have been a surprise to anyone because of the environment in which the election was fought. For years, the democratic movement in the states, backed by the socialist movement and the academic community, had brought about policy stances that were of great concern to people across a political spectrum. Socialism has never worked and socialism likely never will work in spite of the many ways in which those who are in favour of it try to dress it up. Against that background of the great socialist push, Trump came to power with a large mandate.

However, he squandered that mandate. He sacrificed it on the altar of ego and pride. Every time Trump turned around, he claimed to be the best president, have the greatest ideas and a vigourous program for the rebuilding of the United States. The man showed no grace, almost no humility and, in spite of his great claims about his intelligence, he didn't show a lot of intelligence in his determination to "Make America Great Again". He lost sight of the goals.

For those who saw the benefit in Trump's policies, it will be a great disappointment. However, there is a big lesson here. Politicians aren't elected to ride their ego, to line their pockets, to make enemies, or, in Trump's case, just to do some very stupid things. In terms of trade, he picked a trade war between Canada and United States when trade is essential to the well-being of both countries.

Trump had the idea that tariffs were a wonderful way to raise money to support government programs and the operations of the government. What he failed to realize was that the citizens of the United States were the ones who were paying the tariffs on goods and services brought in from Canada and other countries. Those goods and services were being made more expensive by the tariffs. Trump's theory was that if things from other countries cost more money, then the United States would produce or grow more and more of those things that were being tariffed.

What he refused to realize is it takes months and years to increase growth capacity in industries, be it manufacturing or farming. You can't just turn on the tap and produce more cars, canola or potash. It takes a long time to catch up to the deficiencies that built up within the US manufacturing system over the past many decades. Cheaper goods from other countries are part of the problem but one of the reasons goods are cheaper from other countries, especially China, is that the American workers and their very powerful unions have driven US manufacturers to the brink in terms of affordability. It's fine to earn 50 bucks an hour, but if that same product you're making can be made in China for 15 bucks, surprise, surprise– it's going to be cheaper.

Trump will go down in history as having some very good ideas about how to manage the United States and what policies would be best for the United States. But he will go down in history as a disaster, politically and economically. Trump didn't act alone; he acted on the advice of a number of people who thought they could build a great American dream again by strong arming other countries.

But over-arching all of the policies is the fact that Trump can't get past his own ego. Trump is not the greatest president, he's not the smartest businessman, and he certainly isn't going to go down in history as a great president. He will be fortunate if, in the last two years of his term, he can retrieve or re-polish the image to a point where people will even consider him as being somewhat successful. Early on in his term, a person who said they agreed with a lot of his policies also said, "The man lies!"

That is correct, but even worse than the lies that he tells the public and other countries is the one big lie he tells himself. He may be the greatest buffoon, or the man with the biggest ego, but those kind of attributes are what brought him down. Pride goes before a fall and that was illustrated in a big way last week in the US mid-term elections.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this column are the writer's personal views and are not to be taken as being the view of the news staff.



Really???

This month has been filled with headshaking and headscratching. I have been perplexed and puzzled, irritated and irrational. It's been a ride!

Part one involves technology, lack of understanding of technology, and inability to navigate technology. And, like Yogi the Bear, I like to think I'm smarter than the average bear– very senior citizen in this case. What got my knickers in a knot? It's my own fault, which never makes it easier to confess. I inadvertently allowed my Canadian Dental Care Plan to lapse– even after the friendly letter reminder. So, faced with another dental appointment, it seemed like the appropriate time to reapply for coverage. I was doing so well; remembering passwords, clicking 'next' at a good rate, when 'they' needed a personal code, available through/with OAS or CPP. I have those documents on file and even with many tries of many numbers, no clicking 'next'. And so, with grave trepidation I called the help number provided. It's really not difficult to imagine what happens next. I press one or two, listen to prompts, press a number again, and after some lovely elevator music, I am shuffled to another line where a voice cheerfully informs me that with the lengthy wait anticipated, it would be their recommendation that I try calling on another day. Really! Again, I am of average intelligence, average ability to find my way around government forms, average level of patience and understanding (I think!) and I slunk away from my project, defeated. It shouldn't be so difficult. And I should not have allowed it to lapse…

Part two was more of an amazed headshaking. But still a 'really!' Some of you may recall my rant about the condition of the sidewalks around town, concerned that we centre the housing for seniors around the town centre, and then fail to provide safe routes for them to travel. Some of you were kind enough to encourage my tilting at windmills, and some of you were kind enough to forgive my spouting off. So… I never did receive any reply from any town council member, no recognition of my letter of concern. BUT the two sections of sidewalk that were the very worst (in my opinion), are being repaired, improved, fixed– made serviceable! A little hallelujah here! Thank you to whoever initiated the work projects.

Part three, the final part, and this one hurts, how much further can the insanity in this world go… I gave away my television set, still have a trusted friend that informs me of world happenings that I should be aware of, and catch some news headlines online. I am encouraged by the potential for change following the mid term elections in our neighbouring country. But… there is until January for havoc to be wrecked… All around us we see and hear of injustice, lack of mercy, greed and despair. This is a slow and mournful shaking of the head. The distance between the haves and have nots has widened with only a few left in the middle. The cost of daily needs, never mind the wants, is mind numbing. Why can't we share… Still no other place I wish to live, and no other person I wish to be!

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PCs will create addiction recovery centre of excellence, and expand treatment across Manitoba

Submitted
By Media PC Manitoba

An elected Progressive Conservative government will transform the former Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC) into an addiction recovery centre of excellence, Jeff Bereza, PC candidate for Portage la Prairie, announced today.

"Too many Manitobans have fallen into the depths of addictions without access to treatment," said Bereza. "Our PC plan will create a meaningful path to recovery that provides Manitobans the opportunity to rebuild their lives."

A Progressive Conservative government will expand addiction treatment capacity across Manitoba, beginning with the former MDC facility in Portage la Prairie. The residential care facility and land with two dozen buildings have sat vacant since being closed in 2024 without a plan for future use. PCs will work with experts and community to transform the 100-acre site into a dedicated recovery campus.

Bereza notes that Portage la Prairie would be ideal for housing such a hub due to its central location in southern Manitoba, proximity to Winnipeg, Brandon, and several First Nation communities, the urban–rural make up of the region, a brand-new PC-built hospital on the way, and an airport that can connect to northern communities.

"When I decided that I wanted to move from addiction into recovery and change my life, there was no immediate help available and I had to wait months for a space to open up," said Joseph Fourre, founder of the Singing Red Bear Foundation. "I believe this recovery-based model that PCs are proposing is the very hand up that Manitobans suffering from addiction need. It's a model that invests in Manitobans when they are at their worst and works with them to bring their best."

With the support of his children, Fourre is almost eight years sober after a 40-year battle with heroin and crystal meth addiction.

The transformation of MDC will be part of a broader Progressive Conservative strategy focused on recovery and results. The provincial strategy will build capacity and ensure better access to detox, rehabilitation, and long-term recovery supports in Manitoba.

The plan builds on previous PC work to tackle the growing addictions crisis in Manitoba. Within the first few years of taking government in 2016, PCs established the province's first-ever Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinics, as well as widely expanding access to and distribution of the life-saving drug naloxone.

"There is no compassion in leaving people suspended in addiction," said Bereza. "Families want their loved ones back. Our PC plan asks Manitobans to expect more from their government and to reject the notion that worsening rates of addiction and overdoses are simply the status quo. This is our compassionate conservative stance."

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Virden Landfill: 204-748-6033

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736

VIRDEN
CENTRE OF IT ALL

Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

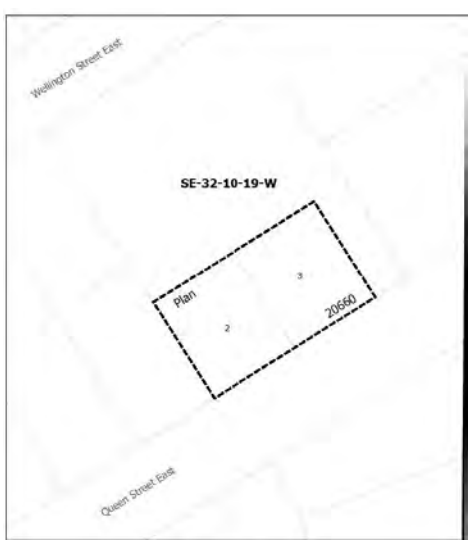
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Under the Authority of the Planning Act

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a PUBLIC HEARING will be held to receive representations from any persons who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

Town of Virden BY-LAW NO. 2828 being an AMENDMENT to the Town of Virden ZONING BY-LAW NO. 2769, as amended.

HEARING LOCATION: Town of Virden Municipal Council Chambers 236 Wellington Street West
Box 310 Virden, Manitoba ROM 2C0.
DATE & TIME: December 15, 2026 @ 7:30 PM
GENERAL INTENT OF BY-LAW NO. 2823:
To rezone NE ¼ 22-10-26 WPM, Being lot 2 and 3 of plan 20660 BLTO from "RT" Residential Two-Family to "RM" Residential Multiple Family.
AREA AFFECTED: NE ¼ 22-10-26 WPM, Being lot 2 and 3 of plan 20660 BLTO.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Cory Nixon, Development Officer
Box 310 - 236 Wellington Street West
Virden, Manitoba R0M 2C0
Phone (204) 748-2440
Email: build.devofficer@virden.ca



A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday 8:30am – 4:00pm. Copies may be made, and extracts taken therefrom, upon request.

2026 Citizen of the Year

Nominations now open!

Nominate a deserving citizen for Citizen of the Year.

Deadline to submit your nomination is November 13, 2026.

Visit virden.ca/p/citizen-of-the-year or call the Town Office for more information.

Upcoming Council Meetings

November 17 & December 1

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Employment Opportunity

Sanitation II Position

This is the senior position in the garbage collection division of the Public Works Department.

This position requires an individual that is in good health and capable of carrying out the physical requirements of the job and able to pass a medical examination. A high school diploma or equivalent is required as well as a Class 3 with Air driver's license.

Full job description is available on the Town of Virden website.

Please forward resume with cover letter to:
Faye Pope, Office/HR Manager
Town of Virden, Box 310, Virden, MB, R0M 2C0
Email: office.manager@virden.ca

George Canyon and Aaron Pritchett at the AUD Theatre

Children Believe are proud to present CCMA winners, and beloved Canadian Country superstars George Canyon and Aaron Pritchett as they unite for their coast to coast Cowboy Christmas Tour.

- December 7, 2026
- VIP Doors Open at 6:30pm, General Admission Doors Open at 7:00pm, Concert Starts at 8:00 PM
- Tickets available at the Town Office and Online
- For more information and to purchase your tickets please visit: Showpass / George Canyon and Aaron Pritchett 2026 / Virden

info@virden.ca www.virden.ca Town of Virden @virdentown

Helen Drysdale

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

To help you make the most of fall's bounty here are recipes to help celebrate fall produce.

This recipe comes together easily and quickly and your family will think you have fussed.

Curried cauliflower

1 head cauliflower, cut into florets
1 can cream of chicken soup
2 Tbsp. milk
1/3 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
2 tsp. curry powder
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
1 cup cracker crumbs

Grease a casserole dish large enough to hold the cauliflower mixture. Place the cauliflower in a steamer over boiling water, and cover. Cook until tender but still firm. Drain, and place in the casserole dish.

In a bowl, combine the soup, milk, mayo, cheese, curry powder and pepper; mix to combine and pour over cauliflower. Mix melted butter and cracker crumbs and sprinkle over all. Bake at 350°F (180°C) for 30 minutes.

Cake for breakfast? Yes! Carrot cake pancakes taste just like the dessert, but in pancake form. Perfect for a healthy everyday breakfast or a Sunday brunch! These carrot cake pancake are made easy by using a pancake mix. If not making my pancakes from scratch I use Coyote Mix. This mix is made in made in Alberta with whole grain and makes simply delicious pancakes. If you are vegan swap out the egg for a flax egg recipe or vegan egg substitute and a dairy-free milk option, such as almond milk, soy milk or oat milk.

Carrot cake pancakes

2 cups pancake mix
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/4 tsp. ginger
2 large eggs
1 cup whole milk
1 cup finely shredded carrots
1/4 cup raisins, finely chopped
oil for the frying pan
Maple cream cheese topping:
1/2 package of cream cheese, room temperature
2 Tbsp. maple syrup
2-3 Tbsp. milk
1/8 tsp. cinnamon
Optional garnish:
chopped toasted walnuts or pecans

Make the cream cheese topping by beating all the ingredients together until creamy. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine pancake mix, cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. In a small bowl, beat eggs and milk; stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Stir in carrots and raisins. Heat a greased griddle or frying pan until hot. Pour batter by 1/4 cupful's and cook until edges are set and there are bubbles in the center, about 3 to 4 minutes. Flip once and cook another 2 minutes or until golden brown. Repeat with remaining batter. Enjoy them with maple cream cheese topping and your favourite syrup.

Fresh, in season pears and cranberries are lightly spiced and baked with a crumbly oat topping in this comforting fall dessert. Delicious served warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Cranberry pear crisp

5-6 pears peeled, cored, and sliced thick
1 1/2 cups fresh cranberries
2/3 cup sugar
2 tsp. cornstarch
1/2 tsp. ginger
Topping:
1 cup old-fashioned oats
1/2 cup flour
3/4 cup light brown sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 cup butter cubed

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly grease a baking dish; evenly spread fruit into the bottom of the baking dish. Mix the sugar, corn starch and ginger together and sprinkle over the fruit in the dish. In a bowl, add the oats, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and cubed butter. With a pastry blender mix the butter into the dry ingredients until it resembles crumbs the size of peas. Sprinkle crumbs over the top of the fruit. Place the dish in the oven and bake uncovered for about 40 minutes. The topping will feel firm and be a deep golden brown once done. The fruit will be tender, juicy, and bubbly underneath. Serve warm with a dollop of vanilla ice cream over each serving.

When parenting feels like November



There are seasons of parenting that feel bright and easy. Summer is full of adventures, sunshine, and memories you're certain your children will treasure forever. Then there's November. Not just the month itself, but the feeling.

The lunches still need packing. The laundry still needs folding. Children still need rides, snacks, help with homework, and someone to listen to their endless stories about recess drama. But somewhere between the early sunsets and colder temperatures, many parents find themselves running a little lower on energy. November parenting often isn't about creating magical moments. It's about showing up.

It's making supper when you'd rather order takeout. Reading one more bedtime story when you're counting down the minutes until you can finally sit down. Listening to a child's excited retelling of a game they played at school when your own brain feels foggy from a long day.

The funny thing is that children rarely notice when we're in these quieter seasons. They don't see the mental checklist running through our heads or the exhaustion we feel after a busy week. They simply see Mom or Dad sitting beside them at the table, helping with homework or watching them perform a living-room dance they've rehearsed all afternoon.

As parents, we often put pressure on ourselves to make every season memorable. We celebrate summer adventures and holiday traditions, but life is mostly built in the ordinary days in between. Maybe that's what November teaches us.

Parenting isn't measured by the grand moments. It's measured by consistency. By being there on the days when nothing special happens. By showing up even when you're tired, stressed, or counting the hours until bedtime. Because years from now, our children probably won't remember a random Tuesday in November. But they'll remember that someone was always there.

Miniota News

Submitted
By Linda Clark

Randy and Ollie McKean, Donna Brown, and Del and Sheila Sheane recently travelled to Lloydminster to join in an 80th birthday celebration for their aunt Grace McKean. They then continued on to Edmonton to celebrate their uncle Russ Johnston's 85th birthday. At the same time they enjoyed visiting with many friends and relatives.

Our Miniota community extends sympathy to the Nash family on the death of Andy. Our thoughts are with his wife, Krista; his mother Sandra, and his siblings Greg and Susan and their families.

We also extend our sympathy to Sue and Ryan Canart, Finn, Stella and Ellis on the death of Sue's parents this past week, Bill and Jean Mulligan.

"We bereaved are not alone. We belong to the largest company in all the world – the company of those who have known suffering." -Helen Keller

Isabella News

Bernice Still's family were home to honour their mom, grandma, sister and aunt at a graveside service at the Isabella cemetery. Her son Rick Still and his daughter Shannon, and a niece Gail and her husband Wayne Brown, came from Calgary. Her granddaughter Kaitlyn Still Wever also came from Alberta and grandson Anthony Still from Brandon. Also attending was her niece Rev. Cheryl Toth of Regina; niece Sandy and her husband Les Bridgeman from Rossman Lake and nephew Kevin and Ceri Doran of Brandon, along with other family members from Miniota, Hamiota, Shoal Lake and Isabella. Our sympathy also to Bernice's sister-in-law Margaret Still and the many nieces and nephews of the Still family.


Smell rotten eggs?
Evacuate. It could be natural gas.
Safety is the answer.
Manitoba Hydro
energy for life

SAIL launches "Be a Santa to a Senior" to spread Christmas cheer in Elkhorn



PHOTO FROM METRO CREATIVE

Be a Santa to a Senior.

By Beth McConnell
Empire-Advance

SAIL (Seniors Access to Independent Living) is introducing a new holiday initiative this year with one simple goal: ensuring that every senior in and around Elkhorn feels remembered, valued, and supported during the Christmas season. The project, called Be a Santa to a Senior, aims to place at least one wrapped gift under the tree for individuals who may otherwise spend Christmas alone or without much celebration.

The idea is rooted in kindness rather than recognition. It's designed to brighten the holidays for seniors who have been unwell, are facing difficult circumstances, or simply need a reminder that their community is thinking of them.

How the Project Works

The process begins with nominations. From November 2 to 13, community members, individuals, families, businesses, organizations, or classrooms, can call SAIL to confidentially nominate someone who could benefit from a little extra joy this season. Nominators provide the person's name, age, address, any allergies, and a few gift ideas. Importantly, nominees will never be told who nominated them.

Once nominations close, SAIL will prepare paper stockings, each labeled with a number that corresponds to a recipient. These stockings will list the person's gender and a few suggested gift ideas. The stockings will be hung on a Christmas tree at the Twin Valley Co op Grocery Store, where they will be available from November 18 to December 14.

Community members can visit the store, choose a stocking, and purchase a gift. There is no minimum cost, thoughtful, simple gifts are encouraged. After wrapping the present, donors mark the stocking number clearly on the outside and return it under the tree. Donors may call SAIL to report which stocking they took, but anonymous participation is welcome. The only request is that people take only what they can commit to completing.

On December 15, SAIL will collect all the gifts and organize them for delivery. December 17 will be delivery day, when each nominated senior receives a surprise gift chosen just for them.

A Project Built on Compassion

Confidentiality is central to the initiative. Neither nominators nor nominees will be publicly identified. The project is not about charity or highlighting hardship, it is about connection. It is about reminding seniors that they are part of a community that cares deeply about them.

The gifts do not need to be extravagant. A warm blanket, a favourite snack, a puzzle, a book, or a pair of cozy socks can mean more than people realize. What matters most is the message behind the gesture: you are not alone this Christmas.

SAIL hopes the community will embrace this new project and help spread joy to as many seniors as possible. A small act of kindness can make a profound difference, especially during the holidays.

Virden's own Winter Wonderland



PHOTO BY BETH MCCONNELL

Holiday cheer was on full display during Flower Attic & Gifts' annual Christmas Open House, November 6 and 7, where visitors browsed festive décor, seasonal displays, fresh greenery and gift ideas while enjoying treats, discounts and prize opportunities. The event helped kick off the Christmas shopping season and offered plenty of inspiration for holiday decorating. Don't forget to support local businesses like the Flower Attic, during the holiday season.



SPORTS

Oil Capitals quartet enjoys All-Star Challenge experience

By Robin Wark
Empire-Advance

Four members of the Virden Oil Capitals represented the organization and community well at the 2026 Western All-Star Challenge.

Forward Ahmad Fayad and defencemen Spencer Kuntz and Christian Pitz, a Virden product, competed for Team Manitoba Junior Hockey League against Team Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League in the two-game showcase featuring the leagues' top under-19 players. Dana Warrener, the team's certified athletic therapist, was also part of Team MJHL at the Challenge in Martensville, Sask., Nov. 2-4.

"The thing I enjoyed the most about being part of the event was the level of competition was very high with some of the best players in the MJHL and SJHL, as well as getting to know some of the best players throughout the league and being on the same team as we compete together," said Pitz, who is the son of Tara and Barry Pitz.

Team MJHL lost game one 5-2 and the second tilt 8-6. Pitz recorded an assist in each of the games. Fayad had two assists in game two. Kuntz was in the starting lineup for game two, with Pitz as his defence partner.

"We are very proud to have Spencer, Ahmad and Christian attend the event as players," Virden head coach and general manager Tyson Ramsey said. "All three have had great seasons to this point, they are big parts of our team and very much deserved the opportunity. I thought they performed extremely well and were excellent representatives of our program."

While all three players were rookies competing in the event for the first time, Warrener has been part of all three Western All-Star Challenges to date.

"The Oil Capitals are very lucky to have Dana as a part of our organization and community," Ramsey said. "She is one of the senior and most respected ATs in our league and she does an excellent job with our players. We are very proud of Dana and all she has accomplished within our league and with her personal business (Sideline Therapy) here in Virden."

Warrener enjoys the networking opportunities events like the Challenge provide.

"It's nice to work alongside different coaches, trainers, and players," she said. "You learn a lot from talking with people in different organizations. As always, I enjoy seeing how the hockey guys interact with each other, even though they are on different teams. I find it very interesting how they can go from competing against each other to being buddies the next day at these events."

In game two, Fayad had the second assist on the game's first goal and the lone assist on the goal that put Team MJHL ahead 5-2 before Team SJHL mounted a comeback. When asked what allowed him to contribute offensively, Fayad was quick to credit his teammates:

"It was a great effort all around, the whole team. We stuck to the game plan, which was playing hard, smart and simple."

Although Fayad would have liked to help Team MJHL earn two wins, he enjoyed the experience.



PHOTO BY THE VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Ahmad Fayad, Christian Pitz, Spencer Kuntz and Dana Warrener represented the Virden Oil Capitals at the 2026 Western All-Star Challenge.

"I know we didn't get the end results we wanted, but we still battled hard and we know, for the future, don't take any teams lightly. I still had a great time with those boys and it was an honour being selected by Team MJHL."

Kuntz appreciated various aspects of the 2026 Western All-Star Challenge.

"I enjoyed, first off, how well the team came together right away, we had been battling against each other all year, had scrums, and physical games, which makes it hard for you to be open to then playing with those guys. But, right away, we got to the arena and everyone put that stuff behind us and came together for the week as a team, and, sometimes, even joking about what had happened between each other in past games. I also think the MJ did a great job setting it up. We were always fed great, had all the resources we needed and had a great schedule.

"I enjoyed representing the Virden Oil Caps on a bigger stage, along with Pitzy and Ahms. It was an honour. The games were super fast paced and made you have to make decisions and think that much quicker, or you were getting hit or had someone on you right away. I enjoyed how much skill our team had and the plays we were able to make and set up. Team SJ didn't play like any team in the MJ, so it was good to test us if we could adapt to new play styles and still play our game.

"I wish we got to come out of the week with two wins coming home, but the experience was still amazing and I was very honoured to get to go and represent Virden Oil Capitals and the MJ."

THHL Spotlight: Icemen fall in home opener, Oil Kings earn road win

By Robin Wark
Empire-Advance

While the Oak Lake Icemen hosted their first home opener since 2011, the Virden Oil Kings earned a road win.

The Icemen fell 8-6 to the Pilot Mound Pilots in Tiger Hills Hockey League action on Nov. 7.

The last time a senior team represented the community was in 2011-12, when Oak Lake competed in the North Central Hockey League. The team posted, in part, on social media:

"Wow what a game and what a crowd!! Oak Lake you did not disappoint. It was so great to see the stands full and hear all the cheering. THANKYOU!! Thanks for coming out to support the Icemen's first home game after 14 years away!!!"

The Oil Kings defeated the Melita Bisons 5-2 on Nov. 7. They were scheduled to host the Rivers Jets on Nov. 12 after the Empire-Advance deadline. The team plays in Minnedosa on Nov. 14 before hosting the Deloraine Royals on Nov. 19. The Icemen play in Souris on Nov. 13.

Oil Kings

A strong start propelled the Oil Kings to victory in Melita. Layne Toder and Rylee Zimmer scored to give Virden a 2-0 first-period lead. In the second period, Shane Price scored what would prove to be the game-winner to increase the Oil Kings' lead to 3-0.

Melita scored twice to cut Virden's lead to 3-2. Tanner Koroscil scored on the power play to extend the Oil Kings' lead to 4-2 before the second intermission. In the third period, Virden's Dylan Halliday capped the scoring with a power-play goal to make it 5-2.

"We knew coming into the game it was gonna be a tough one," Price said. "Melita always plays tough, but we had a great team effort right through the entire lineup. Duncan came up huge when we needed him and made some big saves."

Oil Kings goalie Duncan Paddock made 25 saves on 27 shots. Halliday recorded three points, while Foxx McColl and Nolan Wallace each had two assists. Dez Ramsey made 30 saves for Melita. The Bisons' Ethan Siemens and the Oil Kings' Jackson Orr dropped the gloves in the third period.

Icemen

The fans at the Icemen's home opener were treated to a high-scoring contest between the THHL's newest teams. Alex Bueche put the hosts on the scoreboard less than a minute into the game. The Pilots responded with two goals before Oak Lake's Trent North scored to tie the game at 2-2. Pilot Mound scored twice more before the end of the period to take a 4-2 lead. Two of the Pilots' first-period goals were on the power play.

In the second period, the Pilots scored twice, including a power-play goal, to extend their lead to 6-2. Reid Hutchings scored for Oak Lake before the second intermission.

His goal seemed to swing the momentum. Oak Lake opened the third period with three straight goals with Hutchings, North and Bo Bootsman scoring, to tie the game at 6-6. North's goal came shorthanded. The Pilots were able to score once to take the lead 7-6 and add an empty-net goal in the final minute to make it 8-6.

North, Hutchings and Bueche all finished with two points for the Icemen. Oak Lake goaltender Greg Higgens turned away 30 shots. Pilots goalie Aaron Mason had 25 saves.

SPORTS

Sports Notes: Auger, Pitz to compete in Canada Winter Games



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mason Auger, a Kamloops Blazers draft pick, has earned a spot on Team Manitoba's roster for the Canada Winter Games.

By Robin Wark
Empire-Advance

Mason Auger and Easton Pitz will represent Manitoba at the 2027 Canada Winter Games.

The Virden duo were recently announced as members of Team Manitoba's male hockey team for the prestigious multi-sport event. It will be held Feb. 27 to March 14 in Quebec City.

"It's an honour to make Team Manitoba and represent my province at the 2027 Canada Winter Games," Auger said. "I grew up playing with and against many of the guys on this team, so I'm really looking forward to finally playing alongside them and competing at this level. The Games are a big stage, and I'm excited for the experience and to be a part of it."

Pitz has never been to Quebec but said, "It's a place I've always wanted to go to! I'm looking forward to taking in the whole experience and the history of the city."

"I'm super excited for the opportunity to play this level of hockey against the best teams across Canada," Pitz said. "Representing Manitoba with this group of guys is pretty special. I've grown up playing with most of them at some point, so going through this experience together will be incredible. I can't wait!"

Pitz is a forward who plays for Winnipeg's RINK Hockey Academy in the Canadian Sport School Hockey League's U18 Prep ranks. He is the son of Barry and Tara Pitz. Auger, a defenceman, is the son of Kati and Shane Auger. He plays for the New Jersey-based 16U Woodbridge Wolfpack Hockey Club.

Lane, Bisons Play in Virden

The University of Manitoba Bisons, including Virden's Grady Lane, faced the University of Regina Cougars on Nov. 7 in Virden. The men's and women's games at Tundra Oil & Gas Place drew about 525 fans, including members of Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation and Canupawakpa Dakota Nation. The games were organized in conjunction with the Birdtail Sioux First Nation "to remove geographical barriers for youth accessing high-level sport," according to a Nov. 6 Winnipeg Free Press article.

The nation's chief, Tréchelle Bunn, is a former Bisons women's hockey player. She participated in ceremonial puck drops, including one with Lane, the son of Craig and Stacey Lane.

Lane helped his Bisons battle back from a 3-1 third-period deficit to win 4-3 in overtime. Manson's Kurt Rookes, the son of Leanne and Mike, was in the Cougars' lineup. In the women's game, which was preceded by an honour song performed by Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation, the Bisons held off a University of Regina comeback attempt to win 4-2.

Blazers to be Inducted

The 1987 McAuley Blazers have earned their place among Manitoba's baseball greats.

It was announced Nov. 3 that the senior baseball team will be inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame on June 12, 2027.

The 1987 Blazers capped off the season with a 29-12-1 record, capturing the Manitoba Senior Baseball League championship, the provincial AAA title with a victory over the Carman Goldeyes, and the prestigious July 1 tournament in Birtle.



PHOTO BY SALLY DALE

Easton Pitz will represent Team Manitoba at the Canada Winter Games.

Winnipeg's Curtis Grieve is also among the inductees. He played part of his senior baseball career with the MSBL's Virden Oilers.

Other individual inductees include Nicole Madsen of Hamiota, Peter Perreault of Russell, David Blatz of Steinbach, and Joe Carriere and Derrick Dubel of Winnipeg.

Teams being inducted include the 1956-57 Crystal City Bantams/Midgets and the 1977 St. Boniface Knights Midget team.

Jim Mutcheson Sr. and David Olsen will be recognized as honorary lifetime members.

Team Toba

Five Skate Virden members were chosen to be part of Team Toba: Anye du Plessis, Elizabeth Soroka, Jovie Kenderdine, Luke Greenbank and Talaya Dangstorp. Team Toba is Skate Manitoba's provincial development team. It supports the growth of promising young figure skaters through specialized training, education and competitive development opportunities.

Oil Capitals dominate Monarchs in back-to-back wins

By Robin Wark
Empire-Advance

In each of their last two games, the Virden Oil Capitals dethroned the Winnipeg Monarchs.

At home on Nov. 5, the Oil Capitals beat their Manitoba Junior Hockey League foe 10-1. On the road on Nov. 8, Virden prevailed 9-3. The victories improved the Oil Capitals' record to a league-leading 15-3-0-0 as of Nov. 8. They were ranked No. 4 in the Nov. 9 Canadian Junior Hockey League Top 20 Rankings.

The Oil Capitals are hitting the road. The team plays in Steinbach on Nov. 14, in Winnipeg against the Blues on Nov. 16 and in Portage on Nov. 18. Virden's next home game is Nov. 21, when the Waywayseecappo Wolverines come to town.

Oil Caps 10, Monarchs 1

Virden goaltender Kasey Fuson allowed just one goal on 25 shots, while six Oil Capitals scored in the team's 10-1 victory at home. Virden led 5-0 after the first period and 6-1 at the second intermission.

"I thought we had a real good start to the game," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "Some real good pressure to start the game and put them on their heels. We scored on the first shift to set the tone and were able to stay on our game for the majority of the night."

With two goals and three assists for five points, Brooks Siemens was named the First Star of the Game. Ragnar Gillis' two goals netted him Second Star honours. Tyson Ulmer, who had two goals and an assist, was the Third Star. Lucas Laramee also scored two goals and earned an assist. Also scoring for Virden were Carson Wright, who had three points, and Oak Lake Beach's Tyson Draper, who recorded two points. Ahmad Fayad had three assists, while Brady Nelson, Nate Schaefer and Miguel Bonin each had two.

Austin Kindrat made 39 saves for Winnipeg. Poudrette scored the Monarchs' goal.

Oil Caps 9, Monarchs 3

On Nov. 8, the Oil Capitals once again got off to a strong start. They led the Monarchs 3-0 after the first period and 5-1 after the second.

Laramee scored a hat trick and was the First Star. Fayad, the Second Star, lit the lamp twice and recorded two assists for four points. Gillis scored once and was named the Third Star. Virden's other goals came from Draper, Shane Elder and hometown product Christian Pitz. Nelson, Dylan Mickelson and Peyton Getzlaff each had two assists. Virden goalie Micky Gross stopped 19 of the 22 shots he faced.

For Winnipeg, Piet Mierau had 42 saves. Justin Poudrette scored twice for the Monarchs, while Nick Campbell had one goal.

Signing

The Oil Capitals have signed Madden Atkinson to a letter of intent for next season. The Swan River product is a 2011-born defenceman. He is currently playing for Winnipeg's RINK Hockey Academy in the Canadian Sport School Hockey League ranks.

NHL referee's



The National Hockey League referees who officiated the Montreal Canadian vs. Toronto Maple Leafs game on Saturday, November 7 in Toronto, have left me scratching my head. I wonder where the NHL dug these two guys up.

Referee number 18, Tom Chmielewski and number 21 TJ Luxmore, both 14-year veterans of the National Hockey League were the officials of this game. Are they not supposed to be in charge of the game?

One particular melee occurred and after watching it live and then on multiple replays, it makes one wonder what they saw or in this case did not see. They were both standing right there, watching the melee.

With the score 3-0 for Montreal at the time, it makes one wonder if they refereed by the scoreboard, again! I wondered how the Montreal player got the only minor penalty and Toronto escaped any call. At very least, coincidental minors. The Toronto player punched the Montreal player four times in the face, albeit with his gloves on. The Montreal player punched the Toronto player one time with his gloves on as the Montreal player was being held by another Toronto player. How you come up with this call is unbelievable. I think they called the penalty according to the scoreboard as they seem to often do.

Toronto scores on the power play, then adds another goal shortly after and the score is now 3-2, Montreal.

Two 14-year referees should be investigated to see what the rule on punches to the face penalties are. Even the Toronto announcers were shocked by the call and kept replaying the skirmish. They pointed out and asked how did Toronto get the man advantage on the play? They said that Toronto should have gotten the extra minor. This is just another example of refereeing gone wrong in my eyes in the National Hockey League. Refereeing by the scoreboard and by what is taking place on the ice. I have witnessed this thousands of times in the NHL.

I am not finished yet! Later on in the game, around the last 5 minutes when the score is 3-2 Montreal, a Toronto player gets tripped right in the middle of the ice in the offensive zone. The Toronto player has possession of the puck and is pulled down. No call! Did they let that go because they had screwed up earlier? This was not a scoreboard! Anyway, you look at two 14-year veteran referees really messed this up. The NHL will say that these 2 officials will lose game assignments. Do you believe this? I say BS, they won't. The reason I bring this up is this. Have you ever looked at the NHL injury lists and the amount of players who are treated or are out from concussions? The NHL refuses to take accountability for concussions, one day I hope a player or players go after the NHL and sue Gary Bettman and the rest of the NHL for billions!

MJHL Report

Submitted
By Derek Holtom

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League dropped both games last week against the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League at the annual Western All-Star Challenge, which took place in Martensville, Sask., Nov. 3 and 4.

The highly scouted event featured the top under 19 players from both leagues. The SJHL won the first game 5-2 and the second game 8-6 (EN).

In the second game, the MJHL held a 5-2 lead late in the second period but were out-scored 6-1 in the final 24 minutes of the game as they fell 8-6. Stampeders Crosby Harrison (first) and Trace Langan (second) scored for the MJJHL team. Chase Gregg from the Winnipeg Monarchs had a pair (first, second), while Quinten Fisk (first) from the Dauphin Kings and William Picklyk from the Steinbach Pistons (second) had the other goals.

Joe Naccarato from the Swan Valley Stampeders took the loss, stopping 35 shots.

In the opening game, the MJHL led 2-1 after 20 minutes but ended up losing 5-2 to the SJHL.

Langan and Picklyk had both goals for the MJHL. Tate Barnaby from the Dauphin Kings stopped 29 shots while taking the loss.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League Players of the Month feature two players from the Waywayseecappo Wolverines following a dominating month of October.

First up, the Safe Work Manitoba Defenseman of the Month is Cale Livingston of the Waywayseecappo Wolverines. In 11 games, Livingston scored twice and added 10 assists to earn the honour.

Next up is Waywayseecappo netminder Mariko Bercier, who was named the McMunn and Yates Goaltender of the month. Bercier won seven of eight starts last month, posting a 1.52 GAA, a .938 save percentage and one shutout to earn the award.

The RBC Player of the Month is Marek Miller from the Steinbach Pistons. In 10 games he scored nine goals and added 12 assists for 21 points. Seven of those points came in just one game.

The Chevrolet Rookie of the Month is 16-year-old Owen Murray from the Niverville Nighthawks. Murray was a point-a-game player last month, scoring six goals and adding five assists for 11 points to earn his award.

Finally, the Manitoba Pork Peak Performer is Tyson Draper from the Virden Oil Capitals. He had two six-point games last month and finished with 11 goals and nine assists for 20 points to earn this recognition.

The East Division dominated the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries MJHL Stars of the Week.

First up is Marlen Edwards from the Niverville Nighthawks. The two-time league champion had two goals and three assists for five points in three games to earn the honour.

Next up is teammate and goaltender Ben Chornomydz. He won both starts last week, posting a 1.38 GAA, a .943 save percentage and one shutout.

The final winner is Owen Wallace from the Winkler Flyers. The blueliner had a goal and four helpers in two games to earn the honour.

A Century Ago, 1926



A century ago, there was some exciting news as the National Hockey League underwent a massive expansion into the United States, with three iconic franchises playing their first-ever regular season games.

The Chicago Black Hawks skated in their first official match and defeated the Toronto St. Patricks 4-1. This game took place on November 18,1926.

The New York Rangers made their debut 2 nights earlier and played against the Montreal Maroons at Madison Square Garden and defeated the Maroons 1-0.

The Detroit Cougars (Red Wings) made their National Hockey League debut on November 18,1926. Due to stadium construction delays in Detroit, they actually played across the border in Canada at the Border Cities Arena in Windsor, Ontario.

In the Canadian football League, the Ottawa Senators secured their place at the top of the interprovincial rugby football union, paving their way to fourteenth Grey Cup Championship match which would take place in December.

November 1926 also marked the debut of the Winnipeg Maroons as founding members of the brand-new American Hockey Association. Having lost their home when the Winnipeg Auditorium burned down earlier in the year, the Maroons moved into Shea's Amphitheater. Their goalie was a 21-year-old and future National Hockey League Hall of Fame goalie Chuck Gardiner.

The Winnipeg and District Junior Hockey League which later became known as the Manitoba Junior Hockey League launched its 1926-27 season. The Brandon Wheat Kings were members of this league before the Western Canadian Hockey league was formed. Now the Virden Oil Capitals are members of this league and are enjoying a great season. Wouldn't it be fantastic if the Capitals could win and celebrate this season as league Champions, the 100-year champs!



Talk Ask Listen

By Lauren Halowaty
Empire-Advance

A workshop for strengthening mental health conversations in agriculture and rural communities

There will be mental health workshop tailored for agricultural and rural communities, taking place in Virden at Tundra Oil & Gas Place in the Sunrise Credit Union Hall on Thursday, December 10, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Talk Ask Listen is hosted by Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program board member Donna Odell, alongside Pam Grieve (FCC Virden) and Samantha Bertram (MASC Shoal Lake). Presented in partnership with The Do More Agriculture Foundation, the national voice and champion for mental health in Canadian agriculture. Talk Ask Listen is a capacity-building, conversation-focused workshop, not therapy, counselling, or clinical mental health training. Participants build practical skills and confidence to talk about mental health, ask questions, be present and listen to connect, offer support, and guide to relevant resources, including mental health services, crisis lines, and practical tools. The goal is to help people feel more confident to reach out, support one another, and build connected communities where people find belonging and hope. While the holiday season brings joy to many, it can also bring financial stress, hardship, and difficult memories. Attending this workshop is a great way to support yourself and your community during this time of year.

The workshop will cover three key areas:

TALK: Mental health statistics and factors unique to agriculture, the impact of tradition, stigma, and shame, how community is key to mental health journeys, and using language to open conversations.

ASK: How to prepare for and hold conversations about mental health, activate curiosity, act with courage, overcome bias, and build connections through community strength.

LISTEN: How to actively listen to yourself and others, encourage mental health conversations, and cultivate a culture of wellbeing among peers and communities.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will engage in a facilitated and supported mental health conversation in Virden to break barriers and build strength. Start and navigate supportive conversations about mental health with greater confidence. Listen and respond in ways that show care. Connect with relevant support. Help create a culture where talking about mental health and asking for help feels comfortable and accepted.

About the Facilitators:

Talk Ask Listen is delivered by facilitators who each bring a range of experience from agriculture, rural communities, mental health, clinical practice, and peer support. This diverse perspective helps ensure each workshop is grounded in the realities of agricultural life while offering practical, informed approaches to talking about mental health. Admission is free for all attendees, but registration is required. You can register here: https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/talk-ask-listen-virden-mb-tickets-2003617728562#location

Why the landfill fee hike?

By Anne Davison
Empire-Advance

It's a necessary convenience to have a place to dispose of large amounts of refuse, but it has to be handled and buried and there's a cost to that. Town of Virden fees and rates at the landfill are expected to increase in 2027 according to the Town's Chief Administrative officer, Neil Smith.

However, the landfill is having to expand it's holding capacity. Manitoba has standards for waste containment so the site expansion must be engineered to those standards and a liner installed. "There had not been an adjustment in these fees for many years," says Smith. The 2027 rate hike will be needed says Smith, "to better fund infrastructure renewal for the Municipal Solid Waste cell."

For residents who simply put garbage out for collection, the cost is built into property taxes which are revisited yearly during the budgeting period.

Tipping fees however are charged at the landfill for solid waste brought by residents or non-residents. These include things like building demolition or any garbage material that is trucked to the landfill.

The CAO has provided a look at what to expect for 2027:

Minimum charge for Virden residents will increase to $15 for the first 250kg on Jan.1.

Minimum charge for non-residents (outside of town boundaries) will be $20 for the first 250kg.

Smith says, "Some of the charges for items like scrap metal may yet be amended as we move into a new relationship with local industrial partners."

He says, "In general, these adjustments were implemented with reluctance, but the Town urgently needs to generate improved cost recovery for MSW infrastructure as a new 36,000m3 cell costs an estimated $400,000+ to construct."

This extension for the landfill has a projected useful life of 6-7 years based on current use levels, so it's an ongoing expense for the Town.

Virden residents and businesses are receiving a comparatively more attractive range of fees than non-residents.

Recycling helps

Recycling options reduce the quantity of material heading to the landfill (hence costs) and are designed to keep toxic material to a minimum. On the Town of Virden website there's information about recycling working fridges and freezers with Efficiency Manitoba.

For e-waste, there's a site at the rear of the recycling depot, 1185 on 5th Ave. Copper, gold, and rare earth metals are often found in electronic devices, which can help with the cost of recycling.

Recycling used vehicle batteries is a Virden Lions Club fundraiser. To find out more, contact Brian Hayward at 204-522-0835.

For device/flashlight batteries, Virden Home Hardware takes care of recycling these to keep them out of landfills. Batteries can release extra harmful contaminants like heavy metals - mercury, cadmium, and lead. Lithium-ion batteries can ignite under pressure and cause fires in waste management systems.

Every reduction that residents can make through recycling is helpful. At curbside, your Loras recycling blue bins takes glass, paper, plastic and tins. For details check online: www.virden.ca/p/virden-newsletter

Every summer Virden has a hazardous waste program where residents are invited to bring in paint cans and other chemicals to be properly disposed of.

Virden council prepares for new term at inaugural meeting

By Dale Davison
Empire-Advance

The new Town of Virden council met for the first time on Mar. 3.

With newly elected Mayor Bruce Dunning in the chair, the meeting focused on the bylaws and policies that will guide council decisions for the next four years.

The session began with a discussion of some of the bylaws that need to be updated to ensure that council has authority to deal with the issues it faces.

Cemetery

One example of these bylaws deals with the municipality's ongoing responsibility for cemetery operations. CAO Neil Smith explained that the cemetery remains a town-owned asset, and regardless of whether a separate community organization assists, the town remains responsible for the property. Councillors agreed that it is important to have an organizational structure to manage cemetery maintenance.

Public access

Good communication and transparency were important planks in most candidates' platforms during the campaign period for the recent election, and we see this in the public meetings council holds every two weeks.

The way council operates can affect public communication and bylaw 2824 deals with proper procedure during council meetings.

CAO Smith stated that one of the items in this bylaw considers the use of video and audio recording of the meetings. These recordings can improve the accuracy and transparency of news coverage of the meetings but they can also present a challenge.

Smith said, "There's a distinction between our newspaper coming in and taping it…and members of the public, coming in if they're agitated about a particular topic." In cases like this the use of phone camera can become disruptive to the meeting. Smith added, "In other places where I've worked, I've seen that, and bans have been brought in for that kind of behaviour, because it's a type of harassment or intimidation of elected officials and staff."

Following the discussion Smith said there's a significant amount of work facing the municipality to update existing bylaws and create new ones relevant to current challenges the town is facing. Council will organize an information session to determine what bylaws need to be addressed.

Water treatment plant

In his CAO report Smith described a significant issue that had occurred at the town's water treatment plant the previous Thursday. He explained that a small component within the plant's control system had failed, resulting in a disruption that needed immediate attention.

The component was eventually identified as a small battery associated with the control system.

Although the battery is a small part of the control system the problem took several hours to diagnose, demonstrating how the failure of a relatively inexpensive component could potentially jeopardize the operation of critical municipal infrastructure.

He noted that the situation could have been significantly more serious had the failure involved a larger or more complicated component.

The operators and electricians ultimately identified the problem and restored the system to operation.

Coun. Penner asked, "Do we have spares for things like that? And Smith replied, "We've got them ordered now."

Routledge Street concerns

Council discussed several complaints from residents regarding boulevard restoration following paving, sidewalk and curb improvements on Routledge Street.

Three residents submitted letters to council, expressing their concerns about how this work was completed. These concerns included steep slopes between the property and street level, high curbs and poorly matched transitions to existing driveways.

CAO Smith replied with a letter on Oct. 13 explaining how the Town plans to address these issues.

Coun. Marc Savy reported speaking personally with some of the affected residents. Savy said, "They're really glad that they got a response as soon as they made the complaint…but they're all waiting to see what happens in spring…There are a (few) issues but… they said that they're really glad they got a letter. I think they understand now that they've got to wait until spring, and that's what they said."

Council members acknowledged that some complaints were justified, particularly where construction had left noticeable differences between sidewalk elevations and adjoining front yards.

Coun. Travis Penner said, "My understanding is that a subcontractor who was supposed to come and do that final finish fell through, and our own crew and the company in question did their best to tidy it up. However, it wasn't professional landscaping, so it doesn't quite look right in those three or four properties."

Deputy Mayor

Mayor Dunning invited interested councillors to put their names forward for the position of Deputy Mayor. Coun. Marc Savy indicated he was willing to serve and, as there were no other nominations a motion was approved to appoint Savy as deputy mayor. Savy remarked that he still had approximately 300 business cards remaining from his previous service and was pleased that they would not have to be wasted.

CLASSIFIEDS

In Loving Memory

In Loving Memory
Chris Southam
May 25, 1978 - November 14, 2023



It broke our hearts to lose you,
but you did not go alone.
A part of us went with you,
the day God took you home.
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and heartaches make a lane,
we'd walk our way to heaven,
and bring you back again.
In life we loved you dearly,
in death we love you still,
in our hearts you hold a place
no one could ever fill.

Love always,
Jodie, Dylan & Hayden

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To book a table

Thank-you

Thank-you

The family of Larry Rowan wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported us during his illness and following his passing.

Thank you for the cards, flowers, food, messages, memorial donations, visits, and acts of kindness. Your love, support, and shared memories have brought us great comfort during this difficult time.

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Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY
LARRY ROWAN



The family of Larry Rowan celebrates his life as a beloved husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather and friend. Larry was born in Elkhorn, Manitoba in 1945 and passed away at the age of 80. Larry lived a life defined by hard work, adventure, integrity, and an unwavering love for family.

Known for his warm smile and welcoming nature, he had a gift for making everyone feel accepted and valued. Fearless and independent, he approached life with courage, determination, and a strong sense of purpose.

A dedicated and respected worker throughout his life, Larry helped build roads and elevator sites, repaired equipment, operated a sawmill, and tackled every challenge with a tireless work ethic. He believed in leading by example and earned the admiration and respect of all who worked alongside him.

He cherished simple pleasures: a Diet Coke to start the day, a cold Budweiser after a job well done, and, above all, chocolate. He valued friendship deeply and shared decades of laughter, adventures, and memories with lifelong friends who enriched his life.

His greatest pride was his family. He was a devoted grandfather who created cherished memories with his grandchildren, always making each one feel special and loved. Above all, he shared an extraordinary love story with his wife of 60 years. Their steadfast devotion to one another was an inspiration to all who knew them.

Though Parkinson's disease became part of his journey, it never defined him. Through every challenge, he remained strong, kind, resilient, and full of spirit. His courage and grace left a lasting example for those around him.

Larry will be remembered for his generosity, wisdom, determination, and love. His legacy is a life well lived; one filled with adventure, hard work, kindness, acceptance, and a deep love for others.

He will be profoundly missed and forever remembered by his wife, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, extended family, and many dear friends.

A great man leaves behind a quiet echo of kindness, strength, and a love that never truly fades.

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Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY
ERLE HERBERT KINGDON



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Erle Herbert Kingdon, who passed away on October 31, 2026, at the age of 90, at Virden Hospital.

Born on July 13, 1936, in Minnedosa, Erle was the son of John and Elsie Kingdon.

Erle dedicated 35 years of his working life to the Department of Highways, where he built a long career and made many memories along the way.

He is survived by his brothers Maurice and Gerald as well as sisters Hazel and Peggy.

Erle will be lovingly remembered by his wife Alice, his children Randy (Patti), Lori (Keith), Donna (Clarence), his stepchildren Bernie, Deb (Keith), Rob (Dianne) and all his 14 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren.

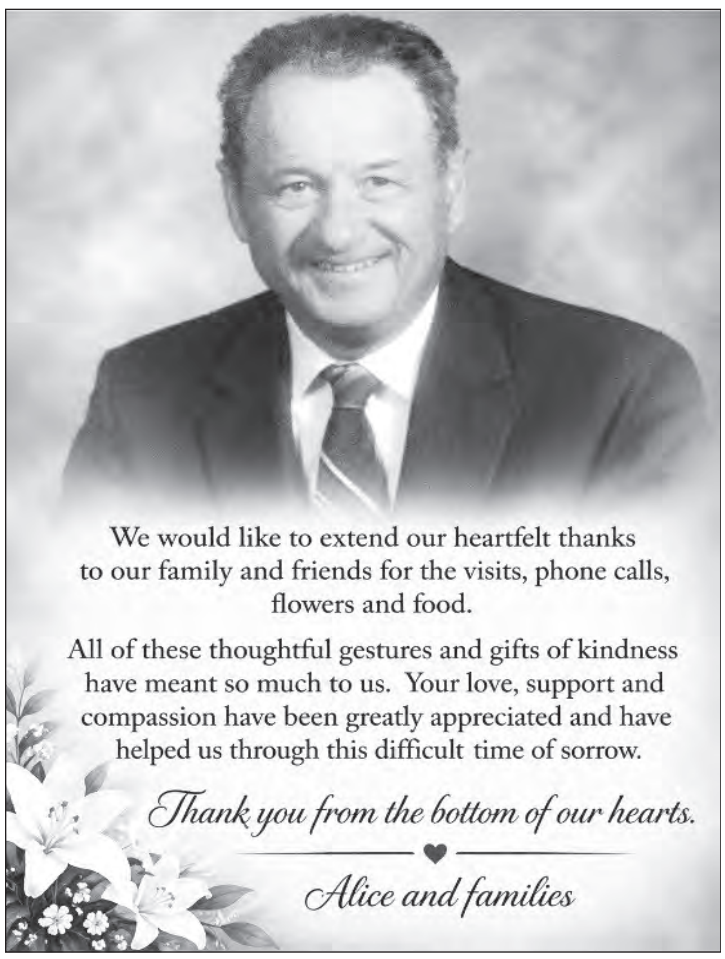
Outside of work and family, Erle enjoyed the outdoors, especially hunting and fishing. Erle volunteered with the Elks, minor hockey and Virden golf course. He looked forward to spending his winters down south, enjoying a change of scenery and escaping the cold Canadian winters.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to all the staff at Virden Hospital for the exceptional care, compassion and kindness shown to Erle during his final days. We are especially grateful to everyone who took the time to care for not only Erle, but our entire family. Your support, dedication and thoughtfulness made a difficult time a little easier, and we will always remember and appreciate everything you did for us.

Erle lived a long life filled with experiences, stories, and memories. His presence will be deeply missed by his family and friends, but the love and memories he leaves behind will live on in the hearts of those who knew him.

Forever loved. Forever remembered.

Thank-you



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CLASSIFIEDS

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Notice

Municipality of Two Borders

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION
SALE OF LANDS FOR ARREARS OF TAXES
MUNICIPALITY OF TWO BORDERS

Pursuant to subsection 367(7) of The Municipal Act, notice is hereby given that unless the tax arrears for the designated year and costs in respect of the hereinafter described properties are paid in full to the Municipality prior to the commencement of the auction, the Municipality will on the **2nd** day of **December, 2026**, at the hour of **10:00 AM**, at Municipality of Two Borders, 138 Main Street, Melita MB, proceed to sell by public auction the following described properties:

Roll Number	Description	Assessed Value	Amount of Arrears & Costs for Which Property May be Offered for Sale (the "Arrears")
23500	LOTS 15, 16 AND 17 BLOCK 5 PLAN 15 BLTO EXC OUT OF SAID LOT 15, THE WLY 25 FEET IN NW 1/4 21-1-28 WPM - 43 THOMPSON AVE., LYLETON	L -$500 B -$21,300	NO RESERVE (Arrears $7,046.27)

The tax sale is subject to the following terms and conditions with respect to each property:

- The Municipality **may** exercise its right to set a reserve bid in the amount of the arrears and costs for any property.
- The Municipality makes no representations or warranties whatsoever concerning the properties being sold.
- If the purchaser intends to bid by proxy, a letter of authorization must be provided prior to the start of the auction.
- The successful purchaser must bring to the auction and pay to the MUNICIPALITY OF TWO BORDERS a non-refundable deposit (the "Deposit") in **cash, certified cheque or bank draft** in the amount of:
  i) The Arrears for the property PLUS
  ii) If the property is non-residential property, GST (5% of the Arrears) or, if the purchaser is a GST registrant, provide a GST Declaration PLUS
  iii) A fee of $504.00 for preparation of the transfer of title documents.
- The successful bid + GST + $504 is the "Purchase Price".
- If the Purchase Price is greater than the Deposit, the balance must be paid within 20 days of the sale.
- If the Purchase Price is less than the Deposit, the excess will be refunded to the purchaser within 5 days of the sale.
- In addition to the Purchase Price, any property taxes issued, but not yet due, and any unpaid municipal utilities must be paid by the purchaser within 20 days of the sale.
- The purchaser will be responsible for registering the transfer of title documents in the land titles office, including the registration costs and land transfer tax, if any.
- The risk for the property lies with the purchaser immediately following the auction.
- The purchaser is responsible for obtaining vacant possession.

Dated this 20th day of October, 2026.

Managed by:
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Notice

Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth
Elkhorn Kenton

STATEMENT OF OFFICIAL RESULTS

I, the undersigned, the senior election official in the local authority, certify that below is an accurate summary of the votes counted for each candidate in respect of this election.

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES

FOR REEVE (1 ELECTED)

Names of Candidates	Number of Votes Given
CANART, Clayton	399 Elected
BAJUS, Adam	259 Not Elected

FOR COUNCILLOR WARD 1 (2 ELECTED)

Names of Candidates	Number of Votes Given
MACDONALD, Diana	164 Elected
GOOD, Darren	161 Elected
JOHNAS, Tayona	101 Not Elected

FOR COUNCILLOR WARD 2 (3 ACCLAIMED)

LYLE KINNAIRD
SANDY HEAMAN
BARB STAMBUSKI

FOR COUNCILLOR WARD 3 (1 ELECTED)

Names of Candidates	Number of Votes Given
MITCHELL, Garth	86 Elected
HUMPHRIES, Jill	27 Not Elected
LACHAPELLE, Denis	23 Not Elected

I also certify that 7 ballot papers were declined, rejected, spoiled or taken from the voting station.

Dated at RM of Wallace-Woodworth - Virden Office this 28th day of October, 2026.

Braden Piling
Senior Election Official

Community Battling Exploitation, an event to disrupt sextortion in Westman

By Anne Davison
Rivers Banner

Protecting kids from online harm and families from devastation has been Val Caldwell's mission for 18 years. She shares information and stories of kids and parents who are reached in time, yet criminal minds seek new victims as the stream of growing children enter the online world.

Cybertip.ca logged 14,153 reports between 2020-2025.

In a relentless information campaign Caldwell brings new voices, personal accounts and actionable strategies to a session in Brandon on Monday, Nov. 16 meant to arm parents and forewarn youth.

Caldwell is bringing a father and author, Carl Burke from PEI to speak. Another voice will be a friend whose 11-year-old was the victim of sextortion.

Harry Burke, at 17, had everything to live for, but on April 24, 2023 he died by suicide. One year after Harry's death the story was told by CBC and then on other news outlets.

Burke says he's coming to Manitoba because this problem isn't going away.

"I'm willing to speak everywhere and anywhere, because the message needs to get out," says Burke. "Just the thought of another family experiencing what we're going through makes me sick. And if we can prevent that, then I'm going to work as hard as I can."

Caldwell is partnering with Brandon's SEAT (Sexual Exploitation Awareness Team) to bring together community resources including Brandon Police Services to speak about local issues.

She says, "My goal is an evening of awareness and understanding of the online dangers from the perspective of families who have lived it."

The Burke family's story is reminiscent of the loss due to sextortion experienced by local families with small town roots.

All the way to the East Coast, the Burke family now know the ordeal of these parents, but they didn't know in 2023 when Harry faced blackmail. Carl wishes they had and he says the media has a duty to keep this issue before the public.

"There's a storm coming…" – Carl Burke

A registered nurse for the province of PEI for 36 years, Carl has researched the impact of AI, and the Internet apps being used to target kids.

"I spent my whole life as a nurse, as an educator. Because I taught lots on dialysis to patients, to families and to hospitals… but I never thought I'd be doing this."

Last winter, Burke wrote and published a small book which he illustrated himself. He hopes parents and children read it together "to sort out what the dangers are on social media. Certainly, wouldn't be all of the dangers, but a good few."

He's now working on a longer book also purposed to help parents and kids navigate the Internet jungle. He sees serious times ahead.

"The last presentation I gave in Somerset (PEI) to the Foster Parents Association of Canada, I said, there's a storm coming and we're just on the outer edge of this because we have no idea what's on the other side… but the long-term effects of social media on our children is astounding."

There's no charge for this session held in the Army Navy Air Force - 31, 14th St. Brandon, on Monday Nov. 16. Caldwell hopes that parents, grandparents, teachers - anyone involved with kids will attend. She advises this will be an impactful night, youth should attend at the discretion of their parents.

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Vaccine inquiry ignites discussion

MP Jackson points to support for vaccine injuries



PHOTO FROM FACEBOOK

Constituents with concerns about the Allison Inquiry are with Grant Jackson, MP for Brandon-Souris.

By Anne Davison
Empire-Advance

In September, Dean Allison, Conservative Member of Parliament for Niagara West held an inquiry examining the impact of the Covid-19 vaccine in a hearing where 50 witnesses were heard. These were selected out of about 1400 people who applied to speak over the four-day inquiry.

In October, several weeks ago, MP for Brandon-Souris, Grant Jackson met with a group of constituents to hear their concerns about the Allison Inquiry hearings.

Jackson thanked constituents who took their time to meet with him. He said on his Facebook page, "I appreciated the opportunity to hear their concerns and discuss the importance of raising awareness about the support available to Canadians who have experienced adverse reactions following vaccination."

On Oct. 24, he said "Liberal MP and Parliamentary Secretary for Health Maggie Chi highlighted the federal government's Vaccine Impact Assistance Program. I encourage anyone who believes they may have experienced a vaccine-related injury to look into what support may be available to them."

Information on the Allison Inquiry website says, "more than 30 democratic countries, including many G7 and Commonwealth nations, have launched major COVID-19 inquiries examining lockdowns, mandates, vaccines and government decision-making."

People continue to refer to events in their lives as 'before, during or post COVID-19'. It was a turning point in recent history that brought a mandatory health requirement for huge sectors of the population. But it's the testimony of injuries from vaccines intended to be safe and effective that the Allison Inquiry heard.

The Allison Inquiry can be viewed through alisoninquiry.com available on their YouTube channel. Going forward, Nov.5 MP Dean Allison will hold a press conference in Parliament's Press Gallery to announce further details regarding the Inquiry into Covid-19 Vaccine Injured Canadians.

The Vaccine Impact Assistance Program (VIAP) found at Canada.ca announces support to people in Canada who have been assessed as having been seriously and permanently injured as a result of receiving a Health Canada-authorized vaccine.

This is a no-fault program. This means applicants aren't required to prove that anyone was negligent or responsible in order to be considered for financial support. Medical experts review applications to determine whether a vaccine was a likely cause of a serious and permanent injury. The amount of financial support is assessed based on the severity of the injury and its long-term impact on daily life.

The Program was first announced in 2020 and began accepting applications in 2021 under its former name, the Vaccine Injury Support Program.

Since April 1, 2026, the Government of Canada administers the Vaccine Impact Assistance Program.

No Stone Left Alone Ceremony – Reston School



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The communities are very grateful to Elana and her students each year who help honour and remember our veterans.

Submitted
By Donna Anderson and Kim McKenzie

Mrs. Elana Wray's Grade 10 Reston School English class performed a "No Stone Left Alone" ceremony on Monday, November 2nd, 2026 at several local cemeteries, namely Reston, Pipestone, Tilston and Sinclair. Volunteers had previously put small Canadian flags at the grave site of every Canadian Veteran in those cemeteries. After a brief ceremony the students laid poppies on the headstones of these local veterans. The group was accompanied by Captain Sam Schierman of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Shilo, Captain Derek Millard (Retired) and Mrs. Kim McKenzie representing the Reston and Area Veteran Banner Committee. Mrs. Michelle Gervin of Virden played the trumpet call for the ceremony and Mrs. Barb Elliott, bus driver, made sure everyone made it safely from stop to stop. The weather did not totally co-operate with winds and light rain, at times. However, there were still brave folks who attended. These few uncomfortable minutes are minor compared to what the soldiers endured during war. Noon lunch was held at the Pipestone Hall. The delegation continued to the Tilston Cemetery for the next ceremony. Following this the local ladies provided refreshments at the Tilston Hall and everyone had a chance to visit and warm up! The final stop was at the Sinclair Cemetery, then back to the school to conclude the day.

These communities are very grateful to Elana and her students each year who help honour and remember our veterans. It is a very important project and great experience for the students. Many have rarely been in a cemetery, and to see those flags at the headstones of young men/women not much older than they are now, is very moving. Some of these smaller communities no longer have Remembrance Day services, so it is a chance for them to still be part of remembering our veterans. We are honoured to be included with the Reston School.

This is year 5 for the No Stone Left Alone services to be held in these 4 communities lead by Elana Wray, Kim McKenzie, Derek Millard and Michelle Gervin. The program initiated in Edmonton to honour the service and sacrifice of Canada's military through youth education and the act of remembrance. In 2025, 17,479 students from 220 communities across Canada participated.



New Reeve shares optimism for RM of Sifton



PHOTO FROM FACEBOOK

RM of Sifton Council 2026-2030. Back: L-R Mark Houston (Ward 3), Tim Croker (Ward 2), Dennis Griffith (Ward 1), Rick Kenderdine (Ward 1), Scott Phillips (Ward 2). Front: L-R Milt Fedak (Ward 3), Melanie Schmidt (Ward 2), Russell Thiessen (Reeve), Daryll Logeot (Ward 2).

By Anne Davison
Empire-Advance

A united council is a priority for Sifton's newly elected reeve, Russell Thiessen and following a western municipalities meeting held in Oak Lake Hall, Oct. 5, Thiessen shared an optimistic outlook for the rural municipality and its many parts.

Oak Lake is strategically located on Highway One. This highway accessible town has a number of small businesses that draw the public to Oak Lake. With good Internet service, a new housing development is a key for the area's future. Additionally, Thiessen continues to mull over a question from the candidates' debate a few weeks ago.

After 20 years on council including a term as deputy reeve, Thiessen says he's humbled to be elected to lead. He ran, prompted by former longtime reeve, Cyril Drewe and words of support from fellow councillors. Dennis Black was also a reeve candidate.

Thiessen was decisively elected and says, "We're starting off as a new council, so, a goal for me as reeve is to keep a council that's united, work through the challenges of where we may not agree on things…. As soon as we become divided, the community suffers."

He wants to hear what the incumbent elected councillors and the new councillors bring forward following the election campaign. "Get those ideas on the table first and foremost and then keep building what was already started by the previous council…."

He says differing views are important, adding, "I desire that we can navigate those differing views and differing perspectives and bring them together and then still be united when we're done."

He says of the municipality's financial future, "We are in a good position for a holding pattern for maintenance and for just status quo. I don't know that we are fully budget ready or dollar ready for the big projects. And I don't blame past council for that. It's just the position we're in."

The municipality has about $1 million in surplus funds, and they're building on that the reeve says.

"We have an 'okay' machinery reserve. We have an 'okay' water services reserve. And we're starting to build a reserve for our development on the north side of town here."

The parcel of land on the north side of Oak Lake town, just south of Hwy One, has already passed several development hurdles.

"We're just in the process of finalizing between what the province is permitting and all of that. We had to have the historical site dig done and we've had that process and we're cleared from what I understand on that. And so, yeah, we're just slowly moving forward."

"It's zoned residential. Our goal would be single-family dwellings, but we are open to multi-family dwellings. I can't speak to the exact (lot) sizes, but they're generous."

Asked about the recent candidate forum, Thiessen acknowledged there were good questions but said, "There was one question that hasn't left my mind and that question was, what businesses do we want to attract to Oak Lake?"

There's a number of services in town and while a large enterprise would be great, Thiessen said attracting small businesses that can thrive, not struggle, is important for Deleau, Oak Lake, Oak Island Resort and Cherry Point areas.

Noting that businesses such as Joe Dandy's drive in, Valleyview Co-op and the Thrift and Thrive already draw traffic to town, Thiessen thinks a small 'mall' would fit well. "A spot where there's traffic. Where local business or local agriculture… could come in and then have that managed by an individual."

With a good staff, he says the municipality is in good position. "We've got a fantastic group of people there working for us and long-time people too… and they're committed to the RM."

Ward 1 candidates were elected by acclamation and they include incumbents Dennis Griffith and Rick Kenderdine while Melanie Schmidt is new.

Ward 2 candidates elected by acclamation are incumbents Scott Phillips and Tim Croker while Daryll Logeot is new.

Ward 3 candidates were both elected. Mark Houston was incumbent and Milt Fedak is new.

NO STONE LEFT ALONE



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

By Ed James
Empire-Advance

The No Stone Left Alone event took place in Elkhorn on November 6. Many of the gravestones in the Elkhorn cemetery gave a bright reflection in the bright morning sunshine as people arrived for a special November event. At a flag site on the hill stood a large number of local school children, local residents, Legion members, area politician reps and members of the military from Base C.F.B. Shilo. The event was the annual "No Stone Left Alone". This service started several years ago by former Elkhorn School Principal and retired Army Captain Kevin Tutthill, CD. Mr Tutthill MC'd the service, which has been a national event to make Canadian youth more aware of Canada's military history and the names and deeds of past soldiers who once lived in their community. He greeted and welcomed everyone, and spoke land acknowledge to all present. Following the singing of "O Canada", there was the reading of the poem, In Flanders Fields, by the school children. The Commitment to Remember was said by an older student.

